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EXDIS

FOR ARA/MEX FOR GEORGE HIGH

E.O. 12356: OADR
 TAGS: OREP, MX, ES, PREL
 SUBJECT: CODEL CHAFEE/BINGAMAN VISIT WITH SEPULVEDA,
 - - - SALVADORAN FOR LEADERS.

1. SUMMARY: SENATOR BINGAMAN AND AMBASSADOR GAVIN MET WITH MEXICAN FOREIGN SECRETARY SEPULVEDA THE MORNING OF DEC 8 TO DISCUSS CENTRAL AMERICAN ISSUES. RESPONDING TO SENATOR BINGAMAN'S QUESTIONS, SEPULVEDA COMMENTED ON THE CONTADORA PROCESS, EL SALVADOR ELECTIONS, U.S.-NICARAGUA RELATIONS, THE STONE MISSION, U.S. MILITARY ROLE IN CENTRAL AMERICA, DANGEROUS TENSIONS IN THE REGION, THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT ON MEXICO, THE PROBLEM HE SEES WITH TREATIES, AND HOW THE U.S. CONGRESS CAN HELP THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PROCESS. AFTER LINKING UP WITH SENATOR CHAFEE, BOTH SENATORS AND STAFF MET WITH SALVADORAN FOR LEADERS ZAMORA AND SAMAYDA IN PRIVATE AT THE MEXICO CITY AIRPORT. FOLLOWING THIS MEETING, SENATORS CHAFEE AND BINGAMAN TOLD MEXICAN REPORTERS THAT THE U.S. HAD NO INTEREST IN PRESSURING MEXICO AND PRAISED THE CONTADORA PEACE EFFORT BEFORE DEPARTING FOR SAN SALVADOR. END SUMMARY.
2. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE CONTADORA PROCESS, SECRETARY SEPULVEDA SAID THAT THE CENTRAL AMERICANS HAVE NOT BEEN FORTHCOMING WITH THE REQUESTED INPUT TO THE CONTADORA DRAFTING PROCESS. THEREFORE, SEPULVEDA SAID, THE GROUP HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO PULL TOGETHER A FINAL DOCUMENT AT THE LAST MEETING IN PANAMA. AS THERE WERE NO PERCEPTIBLE RESULTS FROM THE DEC 1-3 MEETING, THE NEXT ONE WILL HAVE TO BE RESTRICTED TO THE CONTADORA FOUR EXCLUSIVELY, HE SAID. SEPULVEDA TOLD SENATOR BINGAMAN AND THE AMBASSADOR THAT VERIFICATION IS A VERY IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE CONTADORA DOCUMENT OF OBJECTIVES AND THE CENTRAL AMERICANS MUST ACCEPT THIS.
3. CONCERNING THE FUTURE ELECTIONS IN EL SALVADOR, SEPULVEDA COMMENTED THAT FOR SEVERAL REASONS HE DID NOT FEEL THAT THEY WERE A REAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS OF THAT

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COUNTRY. SEPULVEDA'S REASONS WERE: 1) SEVERAL PARTIES ARE NOT EXPECTED TO BE INCLUDED; 2) THE FAR LEFT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE; 3) THE FAR RIGHT MAY WIN THESE "DEMOCRATIC" ELECTIONS AND THEN WHAT WILL HAPPEN?; 4) THE DUBIOUS STATUS OF EX-PRESIDENT DUARTE AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS POSES ANOTHER PROBLEM; AND 5) THE TIMING IS BAD AS IT IS TOO SOON FOR ANY REAL SOLUTIONS TO TAKE ROOT.

4. QUESTIONED ON U.S.-NICARAGUAN RELATIONS, SEPULVEDA HOPED THE U.S. WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS NICARAGUA'S CHANGING ATTITUDE TOWARD REACHING A COMPROMISE. SEPULVEDA SAID THAT THOSE STEPS AND A U.S. WELCOMING OF THEM WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE CONTRADICTORY OR DAMAGING TO CONTADORA.

5. COMMENTING ON THE STONE MISSION, SEPULVEDA SAID THAT IT HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL AND HAS BROUGHT TO LIGHT A MORE ACUTE AWARENESS OF THE MYRIAD PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS IN THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PROCESS.

6. SECRETARY SEPULVEDA SAID THAT THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA, IN PARTICULAR HONDURAS, HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE HEIGHTENED TENSIONS IN THE REGION AND HAS PUT EXTREME PRESSURE ON NICARAGUA. HE SAID THAT THE GREATEST DANGER IS AN UNCONTROLLED CLASH LEADING TO A REGIONAL CONFLICT.

7. SEPULVEDA WENT ON TO POINT OUT THAT TENSIONS IN THE REGION MUST BE REDUCED AS THEY PRESENT AN EXTREMELY DANGEROUS SITUATION NOT ONLY FOR ALL OF CENTRAL AMERICA BUT FOR MEXICO AND THE OTHER CONTADORA COUNTRIES AS WELL. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY EMPHASIZED THE CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER TO MEXICO OF AN EXPLOSIVE SPREAD OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CONFLICT.

8. AFTER THIS VIEW OF THE MORE APOCALYPTIC POSSIBILITIES, SEPULVEDA DISCUSSED SOME OF THE TECHNICAL PROBLEMS HE SEES WITH TREATIES. SEPULVEDA APPARENTLY BELIEVES THAT IF THE POLITICAL WILL TO MAKE THE NECESSARY COMMITMENT TO ACCEPT AND ABIDE BY THE 21 OBJECTIVES OF CONTADORA CAN BE ACHIEVED, THAT WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO ESTABLISH A LASTING PEACE. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID HE DISTRUSTS LONG ELABORATE TREATIES WHICH ARE DIFFICULT TO NEGOTIATE AND ALL TOO OFTEN COLLAPSE WHEN PUT TO THE TEST.

9. FINALLY, SEPULVEDA URGED SENATOR BINGAMAN TO HELP

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THE CENTRAL AMERICAN PEACE PROCESS BY INCREASING THE INTEREST OF THE CONGRESS IN FINDING SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE REGION.

10. FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY SEPULVEDA, SENATOR BINGAMAN JOINED SENATOR CHAFEE AT THE MEXICO CITY AIRPORT. BOTH SENATORS AND STAFF HELD A PRIVATE MEETING OF ONE HOUR WITH SALVADORAN FOR LEADERS ZAMORA AND SAMAYOA BEFORE DEPARTING FOR SAN SALVADOR.

11. THE SENATORIAL VISIT RECEIVED GOOD COVERAGE IN THE MEXICAN PRESS ACCURATELY REFLECTING STATEMENTS MADE TO REPORTERS AT PLANESIDE. THE SENATORS PRAISED THE CONTADORA PEACE EFFORTS AND STATED THAT THE U.S. HAS NO INTEREST IN PRESSURING MEXICO ON ITS NICARAGUA

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POLICY.

(DRAFTED:POL:CCROOK-CASTAN) GAVIN

END OF MESSAGE

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